Blance in land use

1815. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that per capita availability of arable land is reducing in 2005 when it is compared to 1980;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that ever increasing diversification of agricultural land for industrial activities is becoming a major constraint for agricultural development; and

(d) if so, the steps being considered by Government to achieve a fine balance in land usage for industrial activities and agricultural activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The per capita, availability of cultivable land has declined from 0.27 ha. of 1980 to 0.18 ha. in 2003 due to increase in population and diversion of agricultural land and for non agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries etc.

(c) and (d) The increasing diversification of agricultural land for industrial activities and urbanization has a bearing on agricultural development. Government of India is implementing various Waterland Development Programmes namely (i) National Watershed Development Project ?or Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA), (ii) Soil Conservation of Enhancing Productivity of Degraded Land in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soils (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP), (vii) Integrated Waste-land Development Programme (IWDP) and (viii) National Afforestation and Eco-development Project (NAEP) to develop degraded lands in the country. Parts of such developed lands are also brought under cultivation.